

August 2014

Senior Health and Wellness Newsletter

Kentucky Department for Aging and Independent Living



Heat Safety

Seniors and people with chronic health conditions need to be especially careful during hot weather. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), these individuals are more prone to heat illnesses. Heat illnesses happen when our body is overwhelmed by and unable to respond to the heat.

There are several different types of heat illnesses. These include: heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke. Heat Cramps are muscle spasms that happen during heavy exercise or outdoor activity. Heat Exhaustion happens prior to a Heat Stroke and includes heavy sweating, rapid breathing, and fast, weak pulse. Heat Stroke is a life threatening illness in which body temperature may rise above 106°F in minutes. The symptoms include dry skin, rapid, strong pulse and dizziness.

Many factors can increase your risk of heat illness. These include:

- living in a house without air conditioning;
- being dehydrated or not drinking enough fluids;
- lack of mobility and access to transportation;
- alcohol use;
- overdressing;
- being very overweight or underweight;
- having an illness that causes weakness such as heart, lung, or kidney disease; and
- reduced perspiration which can be caused by some medications, and
- visiting overcrowded places.

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IT'S HOT OUTSIDE!
STAY COOL. STAY HYDRATED. STAY INFORMED.

Extremely hot weather can cause sickness or even death.

STAY COOL.
Stay in air-conditioned buildings as much as possible and avoid direct sunlight.

STAY HYDRATED.
Drink plenty of water and don't wait until you're thirsty to drink.

STAY INFORMED.
Stay updated on local weather forecasts so you can plan activities safely when it's hot outside.

KNOW WHEN IT'S HOT!
Check local news for extreme heat alerts and safety tips.

 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Center for Environmental Health

Muscle cramping may be the first sign of heat illness which may lead to heat exhaustion or stroke. Watch for signs of heat exhaustion such as heavy sweating or weakness. If this occurs, move to a cooler location, lie down and loosen clothing, apply cool, wet cloths to the body, and sip water.

Heat Stroke is the most serious heat related illness. It can lead to death or permanent disability if emergency treatment is not provided. The symptoms of heat stroke include strong rapid pulse, lack of sweating, dry flushed skin, mental status changes such as combativeness or confusion, staggering, faintness or coma. **Call 911 if any of these symptoms occur.**

Take precautions during hot weather.

- Drink plenty of fluids. Don't wait until you are thirsty to drink. If your doctor has limited your fluid intake, check with your doctor before making changes to the amount of fluid you drink.
- Replace minerals lost due to sweat. Heavy sweating removes salt and minerals from your body. These will need to be replaced through foods and beverages. If your doctor has you on a sodium restriction, check with your doctor before making any changes to your diet.
- Limit outdoor activities to the cooler parts of the day.

For More Information:

Visit the National Institute of Health—<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/heatillness.html>

Visit the Centers for Disease Control and prevention—<http://www.cdc.gov/extremeheat/warning.html>

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